Course description: Messianism is an important component in Jewish history. Even in Modern times, which are considered secular and rational, the messianic idea plays an important role in shaping political processes. The course examines the messianic idea as a religious, political and sociological phenomenon in modern Jewish history. It also compares the Jewish example to other case studies. Examining how the messianic narrative entered Jewish political discourse enables a critical discussion of its role in Zionist activities as an example of continuity or discontinuity with an older tradition.

Prerequisites: None. Recommended background: Familiarity with Judaism or Jewish civilization.

Course Requirements: a) One paper (5-7 pages) worth 40 points; b) A final exam, worth 50 points; d) Informed and well considered class participation, worth 10 points; e) Regular and punctual attendance is required. Excused absences (such as illness, university business, etc.) must be certified by documentation, such as a doctor's note. If you miss more than 3 class meetings without a valid written excuse you will be docked a full grade increment.

University of Florida GatorLink Email: Class announcements will be sent out to your gatormail accounts via the classrolls mailing list. Check your GatorLink email account on a regular basis; you will be held responsible for all amendments to reading or writing assignments posted there. 'I don't check my GatorLink account' will not be considered a valid excuse for failure to complete an assignment or follow instructions.

Written assignments: Historical writing demands that you make your arguments in a clear and precise manner and that you back them up with historical evidence.
Thus, written assignments will be graded on the basis of **style as well as content**. Completion of the written assignments is *absolutely required*. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Reading assignments**: If you do not make a good faith effort to finish the reading assignments before the meeting, you will likely find yourself frustrated and confused during the lectures. If you find yourself falling behind in the readings, I suggest you at least skim the assigned readings before lecture so you are familiar with the themes and issues addressed on that day.

**Academic Honesty**: In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment and will face official prosecution at the instructor's discretion. To be sure that you are fully aware of the relevant policies please review the Student Honesty Guidelines at: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.html](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.html).

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed.

The following books are available for purchase at Goerings Books, 1717 NW 1st Ave.

**Required**

*Aviezer Ravitzky, Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago, 1996).

**Recommended**

The subjects of the course and reading materials:

1. **The messianic idea in Hebrew scriptures**
   - Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 96a – 98b. Especially 97a-b.

2. **Introductory to Jewish mysticism**

3. **Messianism as a sociological phenomena**

4. **Messianism and the crusades.**

5. **The expulsion from Spain and later the foundations of the Lurianic Kabala.**

6. The Sabbatian movement.

7. The messianic narrative in the modern age – the political Messianism


10. Orthodoxy and Zionism

    - Aviezer Ravitzky, Messianism, 79-144.
12. The critics of Zionism: the ultra Orthodoxy and the messianic idea.


14. The Reform movement and the messianic idea

- Gerson Greenberg, “Samuel Hirsch’s American Judaism”
  *Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (1972-3) 362-382.

15. Habad movement and the messianic expulsion.


16. The movements for the reestablishment of the Third Temple.

  *Hebrew Union College Annual* 74 (2003), pp 279-323.

17. General comparison: contemporary apocalyptic movements and Doomsday cults.